

Working Notes

**TOWN OF ROCKY HILL
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
MEETING OF AUGUST 12, 2014**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairwoman Marti Stiglich called the August 12, 2014 Economic Development Commission meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of Rocky Hill Town Hall, 761 Old Main Street, Rocky Hill, CT. She took the attendance at this point.

Those in attendance: Vice Chairman Mark Walworth, Commissioner Christopher Duff, Commissioner Sharon Mounds and Commissioner John Roderick (Entered at 6:10 p.m.). Also present was: Ray Carpentino (Economic Development Director).

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES & WORKING NOTES

Vice Chairman Mark Walworth made a motion to approve the Minutes and Working Notes of the July 8, 2014 meeting of the Economic Development Commission. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Christopher Duff and adopted unanimously by those present. (Commissioner John Roderick was absent at this point.)

3. ROCKY HILL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE UPDATE/BUSINESS INTRODUCTIONS

Chairwoman Marti Stiglich asked Ray Carpentino if anyone was present from the Rocky Hill Chamber of Commerce at this time and he said no. Chairwoman Marti Stiglich asked if this was the third or fourth meeting where someone from the Rocky Hill Chamber of Commerce didn't show up. Ray Carpentino said that he had been told that the representative from the Rocky Hill Chamber of Commerce would be attending their next meeting. Chairwoman Marti Stiglich said fine and she said that she was going to suggest that this item be taken off of their agenda.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairwoman Marti Stiglich asked if anyone from the public had anything that they wished to say. No one from the public had anything that they wished to say.

5. DISCUSSION/ACTION

a. Ames

Ray Carpentino said the closing for Ames is supposed to be taking place this week and this had been indicated by the Morgan Reed Group. The Morgan Reed Group has an architect and engineers who they hired to analyze the site and he said they are in the process of having this done. Commissioner Sharon Mounds asked if they are analyzing this before the closing. Ray Carpentino said they will be doing this during the whole process. Commissioner Christopher Duff referred to Ray Carpentino's report and he said it states in there that the Morgan Reed Group will be reviewing all existing building plans. Commissioner Christopher Duff asked if this means that there is a potential for any of those buildings to be rehabilitated or he asked if the understanding is that the buildings would have to get knocked down. Ray Carpentino said there probably is a potential for anything at this point. This could be demolition or he said that Morgan Reed Group might want to see if they can use any parts of the building. He thinks the architecture firm wants to see what they structurally have. Chairwoman Marti Stiglich said that this is a work that is in progress but it is up in the air. Ray Carpentino said yes. Chairwoman Marti Stiglich said that there was a deal at least.

b. CERC Training

Ray Carpentino said after having gone back and forth for a few months, he thinks they have this training "nailed down" to November 18, 2014. Chairwoman Marti Stiglich said that will be this Commission's normal meeting date. Ray Carpentino said yes. Commissioner Sharon Mounds told Ray Carpentino that she had e-mailed him and told him that one of those November dates is Election Day. Ray Carpentino said right and he said that he had the wrong date for that. He said that this Commission normally meets the first Tuesday of each month but he believes in November that they will be meeting the following week after that. Chairwoman Marti Stiglich confirmed that they will be meeting on November 18, 2014 and Ray Carpentino said yes. Chairwoman Marti Stiglich said fine. She asked who they thought they should invite to this to come to it as their guests. She thinks that the Mayor and the Town Council should be invited because this will be interesting for them to hear. She also thinks the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Economic Development Subcommittee of the Town Council should be invited to this. She then asked if there was anyone else that they thought they should invite. Ray Carpentino said the Redevelopment Agency should probably be invited to this. Chairwoman Marti Stiglich said that would be a good one. Ray Carpentino said this will be open to the public. Chairwoman Marti Stiglich said that she knows this is open to the public. Commissioner Sharon Mounds said they are going to extend this as an invitation. Chairwoman Marti Stiglich said they could do this by e-mail. She asked if this is something that might be of interest to the Open Space and Conservation Commission. Ray Carpentino said that this might be and he said that he would talk to Bob Alvarado, who is the Staff person for that Commission. Chairwoman Marti Stiglich said okay.

c. Visitations

Chairwoman Marti Stiglich said that she and Ray Carpentino had visited Simoniz and they had met with the Chief Operating and Chief Financial Officer. Chairwoman Marti Stiglich said that she was very impressed with the site and it is huge. She asked Ray Carpentino how many acres Simoniz has that they can add onto. Ray Carpentino said that Simoniz bought the land behind them and this is approximately four acres. Simoniz can also add quite a few tens of thousands of square feet on the existing property. Chairwoman Marti Stiglich said they also have part of this rented out from previous owners. Ray Carpentino said a portion of the office space is leased out to Cleary Millworks. Chairwoman Marti Stiglich said that Cleary Millworks used to own the building. Chairwoman Marti Stiglich said that one of the things that she had been impressed with is that Simoniz sells cleaning supplies because they basically are in the cleaning business and she said that people would think that maybe there are problems or issues there but she said that they are making money. She is very impressed with how they have all of the pallets set up and how they can get to them. Ray Carpentino said this is all computerized and automated. Chairwoman Marti Stiglich said there are very interesting people there and they have a small Staff. Ray Carpentino thinks they have forty-five employees here and their main headquarters is in Bolton, CT, where everything is manufactured. Chairwoman Marti Stiglich said the one in Rocky Hill is where everything is stored and it is not a manufacturing plant. She said that the gentleman who they met with has been a Town resident for a long time and he used to be a volunteer firefighter so she said that she took the opportunity to thank him for his past service.

Chairwoman Marti Stiglich said when this gentleman had been asked how the Town is treating him and if there is anything that could be done for him that he said he is very happy with the services and with the Town. She said that this gentleman doesn't need anything from them but that he has Ray Carpentino's business card and her business pen she said. Chairwoman Marti Stiglich said the meeting was a very good one and she said that Simoniz is making money. Ray Carpentino said they are also happy with the location because it is an easy access and it is easy to distribute from there.

Chairwoman Marti Stiglich said when she had been told who they were going to be visiting and when she was given a brief explanation of what they do that she had thought that Simoniz would be a typical warehouse but it really isn't. She was also impressed as to how they pick an order up at the computer and they have a schematic as to what pallet they need to go to. She said it is really incredible.

Chairwoman Marti Stiglich said she is very impressed with the fact that they haven't had one business that has really had a problem or an issue with the Town out of all of the visitations she has done so far this year. This includes the visitations that she hasn't done but that she got feedback on. She said that this makes her feel very good that they are doing something right here. One of the things she is hearing is that Rocky Hill has an excellent location. She told them that they should be attracting the kinds of businesses that they would like to have in Rocky Hill.

Vice Chairman Mark Walworth asked if Simoniz makes use of the railroad facility that is behind them. Chairwoman Marti Stiglich said no. Vice Chairman Mark Walworth asked if there is talk of having that line resurrected for all of those properties that are abutting Simoniz. He said that

one of the properties looks like they have a trunk (line) to there. Ray Carpentino said they do and he said the Seven D Lumber, which is right next door, is probably served once a week.

d. POCD Update

Ray Carpentino said that Kim Ricci (Town Planner) has been on vacation for a while. Ray Carpentino said the Planning and Zoning Commission had a public meeting last week or two weeks ago with regards to the Plan of Conservation and Development and he explained some more. He is anticipating meeting with Kim Ricci between now and her next Planning and Zoning Commission meeting, as well as hopefully having a discussion with the consultant and with the Planning and Zoning Commission. Chairwoman Marti Stiglich said okay.

e. Solar Project

Ray Carpentino told everyone, as they may recall, that the Town had put out a RFP for a solar farm. This will be for the sixty-one and a half acre piece of property that the Town owns that is down by the Connecticut River at the gravel pit. He sent out sixty-five packages and five proposals have been received from solar production companies. They are in the process of reviewing these along with the consultant who has been hired to evaluate the technical capability and the financial capability, etc. He said that this is very complicated because at the State level, some of the Solar Regulations haven't been finalized yet. He said they are looking at virtual net metering and he gave more details about that. There would be a purchase agreement. The Town would own this property and the person developing the solar farm would own everything else. This project would be taxable for personal property. This could be worth over \$20,000,000 in value if it is built out to its potential of a 9 Megawatt project. They are looking at where they would go for a purchase power agreement, which would benefit Rocky Hill on the utility bill side, and they are looking at where they would go for a lease payment. He said there will also be additional tax revenue. Chairwoman Marti Stiglich told Ray Carpentino to keep them current as to what is happening and she told him that she guesses they are working with the consultant to get the best possible deal.

Vice Chairman Mark Walworth asked if the State recommended the consultant. Ray Carpentino said this consultant was recommended by the Town Attorney.

Chairwoman Marti Stiglich asked the Commissioners if anyone else had any questions about this and they didn't.

f. Foundry/River's Edge Update

Ray Carpentino said that he had been asked by the Chairman of the Redevelopment Agency to try to get a quick update on this. Part of the site is in the process of being cleared in accordance with the Wetlands Agency. Asbestos testing has been done on the towers per the DEEP (Department of Energy and Environmental Protection). He told them that he had thought at their last meeting that he had mentioned that the first ten feet of the concrete towers had been tested. There was no asbestos. DEEP wants every ten feet to the top to be tested. Chairwoman Marti

Stiglich said okay. Ray Carpentino said that they might be trying to waive that portion. They are also in the process of putting their remedial action plan for environmental testing together.

6. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ray Carpentino referred to the economic activities. He told the Commission that his Monthly Report to the Town Manager was attached to their packets. (Please see the First Attachment.) He told them that they adopted their Mission Statement as they already knew and he said that he had business cards printed up. Chairwoman Marti Stiglich thanked everyone who had contributed to making that a possibility and she asked Ray Carpentino to tell them about his business cards. Ray Carpentino said that those were in his office right now. Chairwoman Marti Stiglich confirmed with Ray Carpentino that his business cards are fold-over ones. Ray Carpentino told the members of this Commission that they are all going to get these. They will be able to write their names on them and the Mission Statement is on them too. Chairwoman Marti Stiglich said that is great. She said that she had done this on another Board that she had been the President of the Board of Directors on. She used to tell people when she got in elevators that she would leave her business card with them if they wanted to volunteer money or their time to a worthy project. She said no one ever turned her down with regards to taking her business card and she also had heard from a couple of people afterwards. She explained that the Mission Statement on the business cards will give them something to talk about with strangers other than it being just a business card with their name on it. Ray Carpentino said he also reconfigured his letterhead for the Economic Development office so the Mission Statement is also on that on the bottom of it.

Ray Carpentino said he had gone over the solar proposal already.

Ray Carpentino said he got a listing from the Assessor's office with regards to every non-residential property. This has on it who owns it and the square footage. He said that he is adding a couple of columns to the spreadsheet. He is identifying which of the properties are for sale or are for lease, as well as how many square feet are in each one.

Ray Carpentino said he is having an issue with a high tech aerospace manufacturer. He still can't find them a property in Rocky Hill because nothing is available for manufacturing. He mentioned a property that an owner might have been willing to sell even though it wasn't available and he said that isn't large enough. The manufacturer needs maybe five acres. He thinks that they need to address this issue with Zoning. Chairwoman Marti Stiglich told Ray Carpentino that she would agree with him on that. Chairwoman Marti Stiglich thinks that people today have a very antiquated thought process when they think about manufacturing and she said this is especially for the people who are her age. She mentioned that manufacturing is very clean today and she said if the right questions are asked then they would understand if they are going to be getting a tremendous influx of traffic that they don't want on certain streets. She said that she keeps thinking of all of the problems with the refrigeration place in Town and some of them with regards to the using of Dividend Road, which can't be used. The manufacturing places that she has been visiting lately aren't what she expected. They are very clean and they are very automated. She thinks that they should be working with the Planning and Zoning Commission to get out there to see what manufacturing is like today. Ray Carpentino said right now that they

will probably try to work this in with the Plan of Conservation and Development because the Zoning Regulations can implement the plan. Chairwoman Marti Stiglich agreed. Ray Carpentino said he would imagine that this would be more of a special permit process and the Planning and Zoning Commission would look at the type of manufacturing. Chairwoman Marti Stiglich thinks if the Regulations are properly written then this will give them what they want for the Town.

Ray Carpentino said that the Town Development Staff had met with a possible owner/developer of the Cromwell Avenue property that is at the intersection of Cromwell Avenue and Brook Street and they went over a very preliminary site plan in conceptual form. This property is approximately two acres. He has put a request in to the realtor to find out how this is going and he said that hopefully something will work there.

Chairwoman Marti Stiglich said that she wanted to mention that the Town got the STEAP (Small Town Economic Assistance Program) Grant. She told Ray Carpentino that he was involved in the writing of this and the securing of \$444,000 for McVicar Field's turf replacement. Ray Carpentino said they are waiting for DEEP to get back to them. DEEP was notified in accordance with the requirements. DEEP has to provide the Town with an agreement that will go to the Town Council for approval. That will need a signature by the Town Manager. The process will then be able to be started. Chairwoman Marti Stiglich said that money is money.

Ray Carpentino said that he had submitted a Main Street Enhancement Fund Grant in mid-May 2014. This will be for portions of Phase II of the Silas Deane Highway Streetscape. Phase II will cost over \$2,000,000. They had the engineering firm come back to give them a budget for what could be done with \$500,000 or less. They came up with a plan that will cost \$450,000+ and this was submitted to the State under this program. He said that he had submitted a Main Street Enhancement Fund Grant last year but the Town didn't get it and hopefully they will get it this year. Chairwoman Marti Stiglich asked if this is something that they are going to be really pleased with. Ray Carpentino asked Chairwoman Marti Stiglich if she meant the plan and she said whatever is being planned on being done. Ray Carpentino said this will be exactly what they had talked about years ago so they will just be carrying on. Chairwoman Marti Stiglich said that many of them weren't here years ago so she asked Ray Carpentino for more details about this. Ray Carpentino said that this had started in 2005 or 2006 and they had designed the Silas Deane Highway Streetscape by 2008. This went approximately one hundred feet north of Elm Street and it incorporated the Center Street, Church Street and the Old Main Street area that had already been done. This then went to just about Ames. This includes center medians, landscaping and also mountable center medians, which are like cobblestone. The blacktop in the center of the intersection of Elm Street, Silas Deane Highway and Old Main Street is going to be a combination of brick and a cobblestone type of pattern. He gave some more details about what the plan includes. Commissioner Christopher Duff asked Ray Carpentino if Phase II will cover all of the things that he had mentioned because that seems like a pretty big scope for \$500,000. Ray Carpentino said they really want to do the center piece with the Cobblestone as part of Phase II, as well as have the landscaping on the other two corners finished. They can also hopefully have some more tree planting done so that the Town Center can be better identified when people are coming up the Silas Deane Highway. He said maybe a couple of benches, etc. will be part of this phase too if they can fit that in. They will work their way out a little bit north and then down

towards Ames, which hopefully may be under redevelopment by that time and that will contribute to this project. Chairwoman Marti Stiglich said that she hopes this will be their year.

Ray Carpentino said Horizon Commons (Kohl's and Aldi) will probably be getting a new owner. He thinks about five years ago that this had transferred ownership. He said that he and the Planning Director had met with an Attorney to screen some questions. Commissioner Sharon Mounds asked if they would be transferring between partners or other entities. Ray Carpentino thinks this will be another entity. Commissioner Christopher Duff asked if they have plans to have that area built further out. Ray Carpentino said that they have plans but they can't find anyone who is willing to locate there because that is not visible and there isn't enough development around it to attract some of the stronger retailers. Commissioner Christopher Duff asked if there is no thought of a mixed used component, etc. Ray Carpentino said no. Commissioner Sharon Mounds said she didn't know why not because Kohl's is packed. Ray Carpentino mentioned the formulas that these chains use and he said that a lot of real estate people don't want to vary from those. He said they want to make sure that whatever property they target is going to be successful. Commissioner John Roderick said that Kohl's is great but he mentioned that if they had a major supermarket there then that would probably be more of an appeal and more of an anchor for them because everybody needs food. Ray Carpentino said that Trader Joe's had looked at that in about 2007 and they were told by the listing agent that this property can't be seen from the exit and it is too far back from the highway. There also isn't enough development around it and Trader Joe's wants to be located in a higher density development location. He said the traffic count is high. This is almost 18,000 cars per day there and there are over 20,000 cars per day by the interchange.

Commissioner Christopher Duff asked if they have had any luck with the ongoing issue they have with the Department of Transportation (DOT). Ray Carpentino said not yet. He said the potential purchaser/developer of that property is working on a plan and they are trying to get to the State to see if they can get information from them. He said that the DOT usually says for local approvals to be gotten first. He is trying to get a hold of the realtor to find out where they are in that project. He said they will try again with their State Representative and State Senator if the potential purchaser/developer needs further assistance.

7. CORRESPONDENCE/DISCUSSION

Chairwoman Marti Stiglich asked if there was any correspondence or discussion. Ray Carpentino told them that he had attached a couple of articles for them in their packets. (Please see the Second Attachment.) Chairwoman Marti Stiglich referred to the "Manufacturing Sector Benefits From High-Tech Efficiency" article that was given to them and she asked Ray Carpentino if he could make sure that the Planning and Zoning Commission gets a copy of this too, if they haven't already gotten it. Ray Carpentino said that he could give this to Kim Ricci and she can probably put this in the Planning and Zoning Commission's packets. Chairwoman Marti Stiglich said that she thought this article is a very interesting one and some of the statistics are very interesting. She referred to what she had mentioned earlier about how manufacturing has had a bad name in the past. Commissioner John Roderick said it is different now because manufacturing isn't engines for example. He said that they are talking space age technology now. Everything needs to be in a clean room, which needs to be monitored because there can't

be a particle of dust in anything. Chairwoman Marti Stiglich said this article is meaningful and this might be something that can seriously be looked at by the Planning and Zoning Commission to incorporate this in the Plan of Conservation and Development since that is being done. Ray Carpentino said he would forward this article for them.

Chairwoman Marti Stiglich asked the Commissioners if any of them had anything else that they would like to bring to the table or discuss. Commissioner John Roderick asked about what had happened with the Cumberland Farms development. Ray Carpentino said this is still valid but he hasn't been in touch with them. Commissioner John Roderick said there is a lot that is for sale now that is across the street from this on the opposite corner. Chairwoman Marti Stiglich said that is across the street from the bus company. Commissioner John Roderick said this is sort of in the front of the property for the bus company. Ray Carpentino said that has been for sale for a while. Commissioner John Roderick said the land has been cleared a little bit now though and there are more prominent signs. Ray Carpentino said that property had been approved for a 10,000 square foot restaurant but they couldn't get through the State Traffic Commission at that time or they didn't care to go through that process so that is trying to be sold now. That property is five acres.

Commissioner Sharon Mounds asked about the little restaurant that is by CVS on Main Street. Ray Carpentino said that is moving along but very slowly. Commissioner Sharon Mounds asked if there is a permit process and she asked if there is a timeline or deadline. Ray Carpentino said no. Commissioner Sharon Mounds asked if the owner owns that building. Ray Carpentino said yes and he said this is under a LLC. He said they have been working on this restaurant and they aren't that far away from opening it.

Chairwoman Marti Stiglich asked if there was anything else. Vice Chairman Mark Walworth told Ray Carpentino under economic activities that it stated that he had met with the Providence/Worcester Railroad. Ray Carpentino said he had today and they have expressed an interest in a portion of this Town's gravel pit. The Providence/Worcester Railroad has a customer who is involved in the natural gas line expansion project in this area. A staging area and a distribution location are needed. The site was shown to them but they are going to pass on it because it would require too much clearing. He thinks there would have been a problematic issue anyway with Providence/Worcester Railroad's timeline and the Town's timeline with the solar project. He explained some more. Commissioner Sharon Mounds said that train used to come through. Ray Carpentino said it still does come through once a week and he mentioned again how this goes to Seven D Lumber. Commissioner Sharon Mounds said she hasn't heard this train in one and a half years so she said it might be stopping south of where she lives.

Chairwoman Marti Stiglich asked if there were any other business items that any Commissioners wanted to discuss. There were none.

8. ADJOURN

Commissioner John Roderick made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:35 p.m. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sharon Mounds and adopted unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Jo-Anne Booth
Recording Secretary